

PALINDROME PAIRS

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In Cat's Cradle, by Kurt Vonnegut Jr., persons whose lives are tangled up for no very logical reasons are said to belong to the same 'karass'. The table on the following two pages consists of pairs of words which also have this property: although not logically (semantically) related, they are inextricably linked to each other by the fact that together they form a palindrome.

These can be regarded as a generalization of reversal pairs such as 'stop - pots' or 'nap - pan', which form the main diagonal (upper left to lower right). The diagonals immediately above and below contain word-pairs christened drop-letter reversals by Dmitri Borgmann in his book Language on Vacation (Scribner's, 1965). In order to fill in the margins of the table as far as possible, any single letter has been regarded as a word. Words appearing in the lower left and upper right corners contain internal palindromes of six letters or more; a type-collection of such words was presented by A. Ross Eckler and Leslie E. Card in the February 1974 issue of Word Ways.

All words in the table can be found as boldface entries in the main section of either the second or third editions of Webster's New International Dictionary, or can be inferred from such entries (plurals of nouns, past tenses of verbs and the like). Jack Levine's three-volume compilation of pattern words in Webster was of inestimable value in locating the more extreme examples; Language on Vacation was helpful in identifying long reversals and drop-letter reversals.

Readers are invited to fill in some of the blanks or extend the table, but are warned that the task will not be easy. Note that it is especially difficult to find words with internal palindromes of eight letters or more; only four appear in the table. The remarkable nature of the pair (s, sensuousness) is visually demonstrated by its separation from the other table entries.

I am indebted to the editor for numerous additions.

a a	as a	add a	agog a	belle b
o go	no on	not on	pull up	noses on
l eel	to put	are era	daft fad	tepee pet
a pupa	we Llew	top spot	trap part	truck curt
y array	so memos	Ona llano	evil olive	rebut tuber
a minima	an Innina	eta pupate	lair oorial	drawn onward
g nipping	no stetson	dey allayed	live nonevil	retem oometer
y rotatory	li keffekil	nib urorubin	emit noontime	model titledom
h cailliach	ai Rotatoria	eta collocate	name garageman	Setim Assamites
		set apocopates	rete millimeter	supra Conocarpus
			noit apocopation	

s
sensuousness

potato p	grammar g	igniting I		levitative l	
simoom is	forever of	rosettes or	underbred nu	castellets ac	
eroded ore	burette rub	sublevel bus	cordelled roc	hawsepipes wah	
burgee grub	trapeze part	bardelle drab	rosanilin asor	remodelled omer	analyticity lana
regnal anger	referee refer	relapses paler	Saramacca maras	nigranilin argin	
diaper repaid	reliant nailer	trigness girt	enamorata Romane		
onager oregano	reified deifier	dioramas amaroid			
	retinue reuniter	desserts stressed	redrawers rewarder		
redart nontrader		laciness Essenical		rotatively levitator	
Etanim effeminate					
Etanim regerminate					